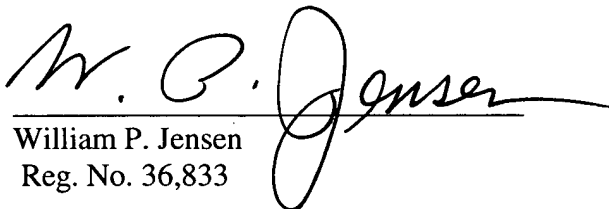


**REMARKS**

Claims 1-32 are pending in this application. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 2, 10, 11, 18, 26 and 27 have been amended. Prompt examination and favorable consideration are earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain prior to issuance of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned to resolve the same. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional amount required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-2112.

Respectfully submitted,

  
William P. Jensen  
Reg. No. 36,833

Date: February 20, 2004

**SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.**  
600 Travis Street, Suite 1600  
Houston, Texas 77002-2911  
Tel. (713) 227-8008  
Fax: (713) 227-9508  
[wjensen@shb.com](mailto:wjensen@shb.com)